

To the Elders and Ministers of every Town within the Jurisdiction
of the *Massachusetts* in *New-England*:

The Governour and Council sendeth greeting;

Reverend, and Beloved in the Lord,

VHereas we finde in the Examples of holy Scripture, that Magistrates have not onely excited and commanded all the people under their Government, to seek the *Lord God of their Fathers, and do the Law and Commandment*, 2 Chron. 14. 2,3,4. Ezra 7. 25,26,27. but also stirred up and sent forth the Levites, accompanied with other principal men, to teach the good knowledge of the *Lord throughout all the Cities of Judah*, 2 Chron. 17. 6,7,8,9. which endeavours have been crowned with Gods blessing.

Also we finde that our Brethren of the Congregational Perswasion in *England* have made a good Profession, in their Book, intituled, *A Declaration of their Faith and Order*, Pag. 59. Sect. 14. where they say, *That although Pastors and Teachers stand especially related unto their particular Churches; yet they ought not to neglect others living within their Parochial Bounds, but besides their constant publick Preaching to them, they ought to enquire after their profiting by the Word, instructing them in, and pressing upon them (whether young or old) the great Doctrines of the Gospel, even personally and particularly, so farre as their strength and time will permit.*

We hope that sundry of you need not a spur in these things, but are conscientiously careful to do your duty: yet forasmuch as we have cause to fear, that there is too much neglect in many places, notwithstanding the Laws long since provided therein; We do therefore think it our duty to emit this Declaration unto you, earnestly desiring, and in the bowels of our Lord Jesus requiring you to be very diligent and careful to Catechize and Instruct all the people (especially the Youth) under your Charge, in the Sound and Orthodox Principles of Christian Religion; and that not onely in publick, but privately from house to house, as blessed *Paul* did, *Acts 20.20.* or at least three, four, or more Families meeting together, as strength and time may permit, taking to your assistance such godly and grave persons as to you may seem most expedient. And also that you labour to inform your selves, (as much as may be meet) how your Hearers do profit by the Word of God, and how their Conversations do agree therewith; and whether the Youth are taught to Reade the *English Tongue*: taking all occasions to apply suitable *Exhortations* particularly unto them, for the Rebuke of those that do evil, and for the Encouragement of them that do well.

The effectual and constant prosecution hereof, we hope will have a tendency to promote the Salvation of Souls, To suppress the growth of Sin and Prophaneness, To beget more Love and Unity amongst the people, and more Reverence and Esteem of the Ministry, and will assuredly be to the enlargement of your Crown and Recompence in Eternal Glory.

Given at Boston the 10th of March 1668. by the Governour and Council, and by them Ordered to be Printed, and sent accordingly.

Edward Rawson Secret^r.

1668

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